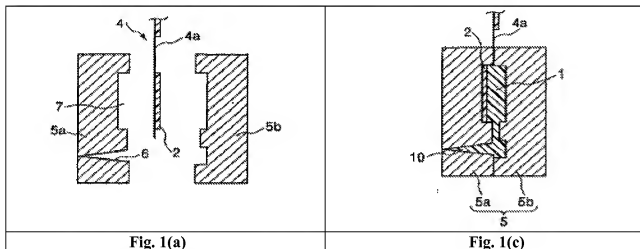


REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

No claims are amended, canceled, or added by this response. Accordingly, upon entry of these remarks, claims 1-3 and 5-6 will remain pending.

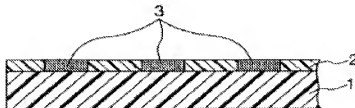
Embodiments of the invention relate to method for manufacturing a card. As shown in **Fig. 1(a)** (reproduced below), in certain embodiments an ink receiving layer (2) is directly connected to a base material sheet (4a).



Next, as shown in **Fig. 1(c)** (reproduced above), to perform injection molding, a transfer sheet (4) made of the ink receiving layer (2) directly on the base material sheet (4a) is formed into a cavity (7) of a metal mold (5a), and a resin (1) is injected into the cavity.

Resin (1) is not joined to the surface of the ink receiving layer that is facing the base material sheet. Rather, the resin (1) is joined to the surface of the ink receiving layer that is facing the cavity.

As shown in Fig. 2 (reproduced below), after the base material sheet is peeled from the ink receiving layer (2), printing is performed on the surface of the ink receiving layer (2) on which the base material sheet previously existed.



Here, the surface of the ink receiving layer (2) that will later be the print surface, is the surface on which the base material sheet previously existed. Thus, in this process that print

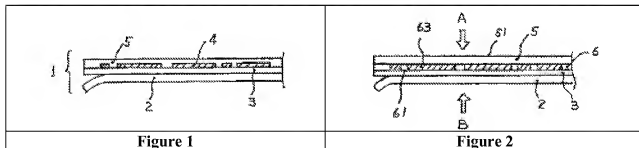
surface is protected by the base material sheet until it is removed. In this manner, the print surface can be maintained in a clean state free from contamination with machine oil or the like.

Accordingly, claim 1 recites as follows:

1. A method for manufacturing a card comprising:
 - a step of forming a transfer sheet by directly forming an ink receiving layer on a base material sheet;
 - a step of inserting a transfer sheet into a cavity of a metal mold in a state where a surface of said ink receiving layer faces a room of said metal mold into which an injection-molding resin is injected;
 - a step of molding a card base by injecting said injection-molding resin into said cavity in a state where said transfer sheet is disposed in said cavity, and at the same time joining said ink receiving layer to said card base;
 - a step of taking out said card base joined by said ink receiving layer from said cavity;
 - a step of peeling said base material sheet from said transfer sheet in a manner that said ink receiving layer is left on said card base; and
 - a step of performing printing to said ink receiving layer after said card base is taken out from said cavity.

All of the claims stand rejected as obvious in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 411028856A to Yamaoka ("the Yamaoka Publication") taken in combination with Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 02001239779A to Aoki et al. ("the Aoki Publication"). Even combined, however, these references fail to teach or suggest all of the elements of the claims.

Specifically, the Yamaoka Publication lacks any explicit teaching to print to an ink receiving layer of a card base, after the card base is taken out from a cavity. For example, Figures 1 and 2 of the Yamaoka Publication are reproduced respectively below:



Specifically, these figures depict a transfer sheet (1), in which a peeling layer (3) exists between a base material sheet (2) and a design print layer (4), as well as between the base material sheet (2) and an ink receiving layer (6). In this configuration of the Yamaoka Publication, the peeling layer (3) covers the ink receiving layer (6) in the card base after injection

mold forming, such that printing cannot be performed on the ink receiving layer (6) after mold forming.

This disclosure by the Yamaoka Publication is entirely consistent with the conventional approaches recognized by the instant specification under “Problem to be Solved by the Invention”, wherein “characters and designs are printed on the ink receiving layer before injection molding”. Other examples of such conventional printing-before-molding techniques are disclosed at least in ¶[0019] of Japanese Patent Publication 2001-354843, and in ¶[0003] of Japanese Patent Publication 2002-80678. Thus, performing printing subsequent to mold forming was not common.

As described above, however, embodiments of the present invention utilize an ink receiving layer being directly connected to a base material sheet. This feature produces a unique effect of readily enabling high-quality printing as the print surface of the ink receiving layer is protected by the base material sheet during card base mold forming.

Accordingly, embodiments of the present invention differ from the Yamaoka Publication. Moreover, given the state of the conventional art, there would have been difficulties involved in conceiving an in-mold forming method for performing printing on an ink receiving layer after mold forming in view of the Yamaoka Publication in combination with the Aoki Publication.

In view of the failure of the art relied upon by the Examiner to teach or suggest all of the elements of the pending claims, it is respectfully asserted that no conclusion of anticipation or obviousness can reasonably be drawn. Continued maintenance of the claim rejections is accordingly improper, and the rejections should be withdrawn.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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